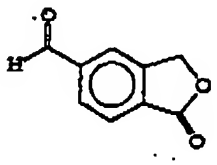
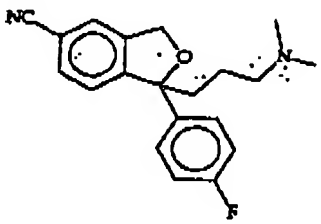
II. Amendments to the Claims

1. [Currently Amended] A process for the preparation of 5-formylphthalide of formula



which comprises submitting a halide of formula



wherein Hal represents chlorine, bromine or iodine, dissolved in a dipolar aprotic solvent to hydrogenation,
where the dipolar aprotic solvent is selected from the group consisting of N,N-dimethylformamide (DMF), N,N-dimethylacetamide (DMA), dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) and acetonitrile, and
where the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst selected from the group consisting of palladium on charcoal (Pd/C) and palladium on barium sulphate ($Pd/BaSO_4$).

2. [Cancelled]

3. [Original] The process of claim 2 wherein said dipolar aprotic solvent is N,N-dimethyl acetamide.

4.-5. [Cancelled]

6. [Currently Amended] The process of claim 4 wherein said hydrogenation catalyst is used, compared to the halide of formula II in a weight/weight ratio comprised between 0.2:1 and 0.05:1~~, preferably of about 0.1:1~~.

7. [Original] The process of claim 1 wherein the halide of formula II is the chlorocarbonyl phthalide.

8. [Currently Amended] The process of claim 1 wherein the concentration of the halide of formula II is comprised between 60 and 80 g/~~l, preferably of about 70 g/~~l.

9. [Currently Amended] The process of claim 1 wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at a pressure between 1 and 5 bar~~, preferably between 2.5 and 3.5 bar~~.

10. [Currently Amended] The process of claim 1 wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at a temperature comprised between room temperature and 120^{0}C~~, preferably between 40 and 80^{0}C~~.

11. [Cancelled]

12. [New] The process of claim 6 where said hydrogenation catalyst is used, compared to the halide of formula II in a weight/weight ratio of about 0.1:1.

13. [New] The process of claim 8 wherein the concentration of the halide of formula II is about 70 g/l.

14. [New] The process of claim 9 wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at a pressure between 2.5 and 3.5 bar.